



Contact:

Executive Director Adrienne Mohan
Tel: (310) 541-7613, x204
Email: amohan@pvplc.org

Communications Manager Louise Olfarnes
Tel: (310) 541-7613, x 210 Cell: (310)

For Immediate Release

Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy Awarded Critical Capstone Funding For Abalone Cove Reserve Restoration Project

Palos Verdes Peninsula: March 1, 2021: The Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy is pleased to announce the grant of \$55,000 from the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) for the multiyear restoration project to restore and enhance 13 acres at Abalone Cove Reserve. This project will improve the ecological value of the Abalone Cove Reserve, providing habitat for rare wildlife, increase numbers of rare plant species and decrease erosion and sediment movement along the bluffs – all while involving the community in the stewardship of this precious coastal area.

The grant provides critical funds required for the Abalone Cove Restoration Project which began two years ago. Grants (including the recent NEEF award with major funding from Toyota Motor North America) received to date to support this project total over \$425,000. The Coastal Conservancy and Natural Resources Conservation Service provided over \$360,000 in funding. California Water Service and Southern California Edison have provided additional gifts. The Conservancy still seeks to raise the final \$100,000 from the community to complete the funding for the project

NEEF's *2021 Biodiversity Conservation Grant* will help support restoration in the Abalone Cove Reserve, located in one of the rarest and most diverse ecosystems in southern California. Considered a biodiversity hotspot for the high number of endemic plant and wildlife species, habitat throughout the entire Palos Verdes Peninsula is a fraction of what it once was due to both widespread development and invasive species spread. Abalone Cove's coastal sage scrub habitat is only 85% of its former range, and is considered one of the most endangered plant communities in the United States. This is why restoring 13 acres of habitat at Abalone Cove Reserve is such an important endeavor to ensure that rare and endangered species may thrive.

Abalone Cove Reserve features beautiful bluff top viewing areas and trails leading to beaches and protected tide pools. It contains important natural marine resources that attracts visitors through passive outdoor recreation opportunities. Abalone Cove is part of the Rancho Palos Verdes Natural Communities Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP) and is a protected area of special interest to US Fish & Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish & Wildlife. It is adjacent to Abalone Cove Shoreline Park that was upgraded with plant-lined pathways and educational signage with the City of Rancho of Palos Verdes in 2014.

The project will restore coastal sage scrub, cactus scrub and host plants to support four special status species: the threatened California gnatcatcher, species of special concern cactus wren, and two federally endangered butterflies: El Segundo blue butterfly and Palos Verdes blue

butterfly, creating a significant resource for the region to benefit pollinators through butterfly and bird habitat expansion. Successful restoration of this ecosystem will eradicate nonnative acacia species, black mustard, ice plant and various other invasive weeds present on the site which limits the biodiversity potential of the area.

According to Conservancy Executive Director Adrienne Mohan, *“It is exciting to have secured the resources needed for this monumental, first restoration project since the City of Rancho Palos Verdes adoption of the NCCP/HCP. This project will fulfill the critical need to support wildlife species that face extinction due to environmental and human pressures, and will also enhance the land’s ability to withstand stresses such as coastal erosion and prolonged drought conditions.”*

Early on in the project, goats were deployed to feast on the proliferation of non-native weeds, while the Conservancy deployed its field crews along with specialized arborists to remove the razor-sharp, invasive cat claw acacia and other shrubs. After clearing nonnative plants, the crew installed temporary irrigation lines. The lines serve two purposes. The first is to assist with the “grow and kill” method of flushing out invasive plants by watering and germinating and then removing them before they can set their seeds. The second is to judiciously water the native plants grown from local seed in the Conservancy’s nursery that have been planted in the fall to ensure successful early establishment.

The next two-year phase began in February 2021 and will go through October 2022, when volunteers and crew will prepare the site with weed eradication to prepare for planting. Native plants for the project are grown from local seeds in the Conservancy’s Native Plant Nursery in San Pedro to maintain genetic integrity and diversity. In the fall, volunteers and crew will install the last four acres of coastal sage scrub and cactus scrub plants.

Plants installed will mimic the natural distribution and vegetation mosaic of adjacent healthy habitats. Rare Californian plants will include Catalina rockflower, *Crossosoma californicum*, and island green dudleya (*Dudleya virens* ssp. *Insularis*). Sea-cliff buckwheat host plant will be planted for El Segundo blue butterflies to help increase a burgeoning population on the coastal bluffs. Similarly, we are providing deerweed and rattlepod host plants for the Palos Verdes blue butterfly to reintroduce onto historic routes in Rancho Palos Verdes.

Volunteer Coordinator, Megan Wolff explains another important aspect of the project: it directly engages the community through public volunteer day opportunities held on Saturdays throughout the year. *“In addition to a comprehensive educational introduction, the Conservancy educates volunteers on appropriate planting and maintenance techniques to care for the coastal sage scrub habitat during volunteer work days. This instruction serves yet another way for the community to connect to the outdoors and enlighten community members to understand the value of diverse native habitats.”*

Volunteer partners are from South Bay high schools and service organizations such as International Environmental Stewards, Los Hermanos, Audubon YES club, Science National Honors Society National Charity League and scouts. If you are interested in helping please contact www.pvplc.org/volunteer.

The Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit community-based organization dedicated to preserving land and restoring habitat for the education and enjoyment of all. The Conservancy owns or manages land in the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve, the Linden H. Chandler and George F Canyon Preserves in Rolling Hills Estates, the White Point Nature Preserve, a facility of the LA City Department of Recreation and Parks, and manages a native plant nursery at the Defense Fuel Supply Point in San Pedro.